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MERCHANTS *of the* MORNING

SAMUEL McCOY

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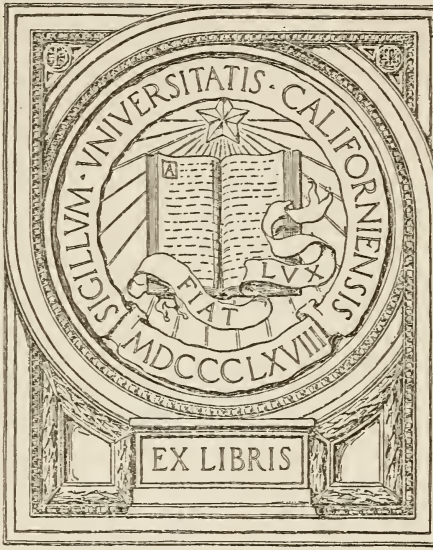

MERCHANTS OF THE MORNING

SAMUEL McCOY

MERCHANTS OF THE MORNING

BY

SAMUEL McCOY

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TO WIN
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MERCHANTS OF THE MORNING

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THE OLD TAVERN

To the oldest inn they knew of
  The rogue made the townsmen lead him;
Down he sat and bade his crew of
  Gentlemen adventurers heed him:—
"This," he said, "is that old Tavern
  Where that olden Poet led me;
Here, in this oak-ribbèd cavern,
  Here, on golden songs he fed me!"

And the townsmen, gaping, winking,
And his men, their spurred heels clinking,
Laughed, each one within him thinking,
"*Songs* are no one's eating, drinking!"

But the rogue, whose heart was hidden
  Underneath his iron vesture,
Drove them out, so that forbidden
  Were they, by his kingly gesture.

THE OLD TAVERN *(Continued)*

"This," he mused, "is that old Tavern
Where that olden Poet led me;
Here, in this oak-ribbèd cavern,
Here, on his own songs he fed me!"

And the shadows, now retreating,
Now advancing, seemed repeating
To themselves in whispers fleeting,
"Songs *are* this man's drinking, eating!"

And the children, shyly coming
To him where he sat at table,
Climbed his mail-clad knees, and humming
Those songs, begged of him their fable.
"Ah," he smiled, "though sorely troubled,
Here he drank of that rich, ruddy
Wine that from his own heart bubbled,
So his very lip seemed bloody!"

Then the shadows fled to dusty
Corners of that chamber musty,
As they used when life was lusty,
And his throat was not so rusty!

"Inn," he said, "thou shalt outlast me
Year on year, while youth and maiden

THE OLD TAVERN *(Continued)*

One by one go singing past thee,
For with memories art thou laden;
Stand thou then, thou ancient Tavern,
Where thy olden Captain led me;
Stand, thou dark, oak-ribbèd cavern
Where on golden songs he fed me!"

Therefore that kind roof, upholden
By the mellowed timbers olden,
Like shy hearts good wines embolden,
Shall hear newer songs and golden!

BRIDAL SONG

In a dark garden of the West,
Where the rich robing of the slumb'rous summer
Cast shadow, splendid shadow, on the garden's
breast,
(For the bright moon was late, a tardy comer)
In the soft shadow of the night of dreams,
He walked with one who bore within her hands
The gift of princes of the Orient lands,
A woven spendour, woven without seams,
A living garment, fashioned out of fire,
A garment lit with soft and slumb'rous fire,
Bright burning with its passion unconfessed,
Which he had given her in mastery;
For this was that proud garment of the breast,
Fashioned from all his worship of the best,
Fashioned from many a night of sleepless misery,
From many a day of splendid ecstasy,
From his dear father's name,
From his mother's holy flame,
From all his heritage of manliness;
(And who shall name the greater or the less

BRIDAL SONG *(Continued)*

Among the fires within that magic dress?)
And this she bore within her happy hands;
And the bright globe,
The moon, that rises tardy over garden lands,
Arose at last and saw the glimmering robe,
Shimmering with secret fire within her happy hands.

At last he folded her upon his breast,
Wore her like a warm jewel on his breast,
Bore her, the purest and the best,
Like a bright jewel, breathing on his breast;
And when the night was holy
And odorous breezes lowly
Whispered among the leaves,
And the bright moon rose higher,
Dropping its heavenly fire
Where the dark water weaves
Its answering glory,
He told her all his worship unconfessed;
All the proud, piteous story
Of the soft fire within the breast,
And she, like a warm jewel breathing,
Feeling his passion wreathing
Its piteous, proud splendour round her breast,
Listened, and was at rest.

VOYAGEURS' SONG

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.
—Matthew Arnold.

DRIFT, brothers, drift!
Down the long shallow reaches floating, floating!
Our voices lift
Songs of another home, another year.
O hark! the hidden singer answers clear—
The thrush pours out his golden-timbred throating!

Fast, brothers, fast,
Down the swift rapids our canoes are flying, flying!
The bend is passed,
Where long-leafed willows rest upon the stream
And hide the eddy with its breast agleam,
And last the River, in his broad strength lying!

VOYAGEURS' SONG *(Continued)*

Soon sets the sun;
From the dark ripples fast the light is flowing, flowing!
See, one by one,
Bright in the swirling flood, the stars gleam out;
Now friendly voices raise their answering shout;
See, on the farther shore, the camp-fire glowing!

THE ARGONAUTS

O SING to us of home!
Of true and simple things!
Till hearts no longer roam,
But fold their wild, wild wings!
For wanderers are we
Upon the wide-stretched earth—
Strange was the farther sea
And finer was its mirth!
We set our hopeful sails,
We voyaged through the years:
Say, now the sunset pales,
Found we more mirth than tears?
What argosies aflame
We launched to unknown coasts!
Say, won they not the same,
Who smiled to hear our boasts?
Let us go back! to those
Who wiselier kept the old:
Their steadier star arose
Above their own hearth's gold!

THE ARGONAUTS *(Continued)*

O sing to us of home,
And true and simple things!
No longer would we roam,
But fold our tired wings!

OUR WORD

THERE is a word in your loved native tongue,
Closer and dearer and than all more sweet,
Which wanderers in their wistful dreams repeat:
Name of the happy house which love has hung
With all high gentlenesses; where has clung
Truth; honour; quiet joys; warm charity;
That fireside sprite, frank hospitality;
Place where our best-loved songs are sung;
Where world-bewildered children find the warm
Enfolding refuge of their mother's breast
And take the blessing of the hallowed tome;
Walled garden; harbour sheltered from all storm;
Safe sanctuary; by the world's unrest
Inviolate; the love-locked haven—"Home!"

AN OLD MOTHER

DEAR mother, standing as a much-loved queen,
Leaving her throne to rest a while, might stand,
At the low lintel of your kitchen door . . .

Let me be laureate in your loved demesne,
The singer of your peaceful, wondrous land:
For no land has deserved men's worship more.

Tired eyes, tired hands, worn body, worn for
mine!
Your white hair, mother, makes your only crown,
And calico, work-stained, your common dress . . .

But O, upon your face what peace divine!
What jollity that will not be cast down,
And love that covereth all with loveliness!

AN OLD MINISTER

". . . for the prize of the high calling of God"

In hours when I review that one dear life,
The life of that one man whom most I owe,
And ponder whether rich or vain his strife,
His toil repaid with bitter wage or no;
If piteous harvest before winter snow;
His head unlaurelled though his long race run;
By no strong son led where still waters flow;
Day hardly softened, though it be near done,—

I cry in pity; yet the westering sun,
With glory not of earth, lights up his face,
And *Heaven* hallows him, as who has won
His earthly fight; far beyond power to trace
My helpless love; and peace rests in his eyes,
And God's high calling is his matchless prize.

THE BRIGHT DAY

It is vain for you to rise up early,
To sit up late,
To eat the bread of sorrows:
For so he giveth his beloved sleep.
—Psalm cxxvii.

After a little space,
Mary, his dearest daughter, covered up his face
And stayed her tears.
For her own task it was, she knew, to face the years,
And live life through as he had always led—
The life whose every thread
Made part of the plain cloak called Sacrifice;
A coat without device,
But one which many, many hearts have blessed
For its warm love, and pressed
Its rough folds to their lips and wept.
For she remembered how her hand he kept
Within his own, and with her walked afield
And watched the sunset its last glory yield.
All this came back to her:
All little things that were;

THE BRIGHT DAY *(Continued)*

And every dear remembrance on her heart
Laid its rich sorrow and its mortal smart,
Too exquisite bereavement to be borne.

Yet, after the long night, the austere morn,
Smiling upon her, said with gentleness:—

I am the living, and I am no less
The dead. *For they have entered into me:*
To-day, not yesterday, is their eternity.
Your past must die with him you loved so much;
He is a part of me; and you must touch
My hand with the warm love of a young child.
For I, the living world, am reconciled
To God's unpitying plan; and all my hours,
My tasks, my needs imperative, and my bright
flowers,
Are fashioned from the souls of those who wor-
ship God.
Nothing God made is underneath the sod!
I am To-day, my daughter, and I need your love!
Look up above—
The sky is leaden, and the cheerless rain
Makes its own misery and pain;

THE BRIGHT DAY *(Continued)*

But you and I can only bear to hear,
Deep in our hearts, the joyous, clear,
Brave music of the soul that sings
Of coming day and living things!

SEAMAN'S KNELL

WHERE the Atlantic runneth free,
Where the Sea hath sovereignty,
Where the Sun's unsheathèd glaive
Hath answer from the flashing wave,
  There thou sinkest,
  There thou drinkest
  Of the draught from which thou shrinkest,
  There thou sinkest,
  And the deeps go over thee.

Thing, where sea-things feed and die,
Canst thou turn thy sightless eye
Upward? through the cold, cold sea,
Know what deeps go over thee?
  Thou art older,
  Thou art colder,
  Than the wave that weights thy shoulder,
  Naught can moulder
  In the grave where thou dost lie!

THE FLEET

OFF THE COAST OF VIRGINIA

"Seeing honour is our lives' ambition, and our ambition after death to have an honourable memory of our life."—Captain John Smith.

In the darkness before dawn
I awoke from out my sleep,
Where I slept upon the land,
And I knew that sleep was gone;
For I heard the restless deep
Run swift along the sand,
Ebb, and return once more;
And I felt the cool, soft breeze
Blowing upon my face
And I rose and sought the shore,
Where the recurrent seas,
Like horses, ran their race;
The grey robes of the fog
Heaved with the heaving swells,
And darkness lay around;
But I heard some old sea-dog,

THE FLEET *(Continued)*

Close in-shore, call, "Six bells!"
And I heard the muffled sound
Of oars, and, farther out,
A rattling anchor chain
And the wash against some hulk,
And, fainter still, a shout . . .
And the Fleet slept again.

But a grey, shadowy bulk,
A phantom from the wrack,
Which broke to let it through,
Took sudden shape and came
Upon the ground-swell's back
Straight toward me, and I knew,
Like a familiar name,
The pinnace! English-built,
Three hundred years ago,
Her banked oars rose and dipped
(To an ancient, deep-sea lilt)
As a boat-crew *used* to row!
And like one the oars were shipped
As they ran her on the beach;
And I saw the leathern skin
And the earrings and the queues
Of the tars who manned her—each

THE FLEET *(Continued)*

Hailing me as of their kin;
And I knew what mighty cruise
These rough mates were landing from;
And my blood rushed to my cheek
And I blessed them on my knees;
As a soldier at the drum
Thrills, I thrilled at sight of these
And I wept, and could not speak!

Do you ask me whence they came?
And American you too?
They the men of Sunken Fleets,
Men that swept the seas like flame,
English-brave and English-true!
From the cliffs where Cornwall meets
The Atlantic's endless foam,
From the old sea-towns of Devon
And the shifting sands of Dee,
Where the petrel has her home,
And the storm cloud splits with levin,
Came these bullies of the sea!

And they passed me close at hand,
And their captains, whom at first
Had been hidden from my view,

THE FLEET *(Continued)*

Paced along the wet sea-sand
Arm in arm, with many a burst
Of laughter which the salt breeze blew
Toward me, from their bearded throats.
(Never more shall be such gain
As I count this, to have seen
All the captains of the boats
First to dare the unmapped main
And court danger like a queen!)

Do you ask me who they were?
And American you too?
These were they who laughed at death
And laid their lives for her,
Greatest England ever knew,
Maiden queen, Elizabeth!
And they named the land they found
For the virgin queen, good Bess,
Great Virginia, the proud!
Slight indeed or risk or wound
For such lands and loveliness!

First of all among the train,
Named like a trumpet-call to charge,
Was Sir Walter Raleigh, knight,

THE FLEET *(Continued)*

"Shepherd of the ocean plain,"
First to crave the sandy marge
Of Virginia, first whose sight
Foretold the great state to be;
And his fine hands rested on
Two friends' shoulders—two whose deeds
Shall be sung unceasingly:
Drake, who struck th' Armada down!
Grenville, whose great sea-fight leads
All the fights on sea or shore!
These the three great admirals
(Laughing like three clear-eyed boys)
Who shall live forevermore!
On whose names the sailor calls
In the gale or battle-noise!

And there passed among the van
Old Sir Thomas Gates, the dam
Of the foundling colony;
Sir George Somers—gentleman,
Who was on the shore a lamb,
But a lion on the sea;
Robert Hunt, the old sea-saint;
Tanned with each sea wind that blows,
Mate Bartholomew Gosnold—

THE FLEET *(Continued)*

Sailormen without a taint,
Better held as *friends* than foes—
God gave them the sea to hold!

Last of all th' Atlantic's brood,
Came from out the sea-fog's pall,
Voyager and fighting-man,
Captain John Smith, plain and rude;
Last and greatest of them all—
First and true American!

So, before the fog had fled
At the dawn, they passed from sight
And their bold staves died away,
But still rang within my head
Each adventure and sea fight
That shall *never* pass away!
"Be of good cheer," one had said
As he bade his men good-bye,
"Heaven's as near by sea as land!"

And the old fire is not dead,
And the brave shall never die,
While the land they found shall stand!

DIRGE: FOR A DEAD ADMIRAL

WHAT woman but would be
Rid of thy mastery,
Thou bully of the sea?

No more the grey sea's breast
Need answer thy behest;
No more thy sullen gun
Shall greet the risen sun,
Where the great dreadnaughts ride
The breast of thy cold bride;
Thou hast fulfilled thy fate:
Need trade no more with hate!

Nay, but I celebrate
Thy long-to-be lorn mate,
Thy mistress and her state,
Thy lady sea's lorn state.
She hath her empery
Not only over thee

DIRGE: FOR A DEAD ADMIRAL *(Continued)*

But o'er *our* misery,—
Hark, doth she mourn for thee?

Nay, what hath she of grief?
She knoweth not the leaf
That on her bosom falls,
Thou last of admirals!

Under the winter moon
She singeth that fierce tune,
Her immemorial rune;
Knoweth not, late or soon,
Careth not
Any jot
For her withholden boon
To all thy spirit's pleas
For infinite surcease!

If, on this winter night,
O thou great admiral
That in thy sombre pall
Liest upon the land,
Thy soul should take his flight
And leave the frozen sand
And yearn above the surge,

DIRGE: FOR A DEAD ADMIRAL *(Continued)*

Think'st thou that any dirge,
Grief inarticulate
From thy bereavèd mate,
Would answer to thy soul
Where the waste waters roll?

Nay, thou hast need of none!
Thy long love-watch is done!
Go, weary lover, pass
To that bright gulf of glass
Where thou shalt ever be
Fain of an *endless* sea!

THE GARDENER OF THE SEA

I

Do you remember that long-vanished night,
Master, upon the lake of Galilee,
When the rude, boist'rous waves did sore affright
Matthieu and Marc and stronger men than me?
Then, in the fourth watch, when all hope was gone,
A radiance and a quiet 'round them grew,
And, like a gardener on some still, smooth lawn,
A Spirit walked the waves—ah, Lord, 'twas you!
And some there were who cried out at that wraith
(That seemed) that trod the murderous sea,
But Peter (who am I) said in his faith:
"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee!"
Yea, of that Garden, to keep watch and ward,
Make me your under-gardener, O Lord!

THE GARDENER OF THE SEA *(Continued)*

II

As a bird (flying
  While night comes on
And the light, dying,
  Foretells no dawn)

Wearily searches,
  Haven to find,
Seeks, never perches,
  Through terror blind:

So, over surges
  Of all despair,
My soul He scourges
  Till I grasp prayer.

III

At evening, when the sky's rich tapestries
Of Tyrian blue grow thick with golden globes,
The Gardener of the Sea with heavenly shoon
Walks to and fro within its several bounds,
As one with sandals wet by twilight dews
Might move in quiet in his garden paths.

THE GARDENER OF THE SEA *(Continued)*

Unquiet Garden! that with lifeless life
Doth crawl and lick the Gardener's piercèd feet!
Forever sterile, though forever sown
With seed of ships and stars and crumbling lands;
Forever sterile, yet forever bright
With the white flashing bloom of breaking seas;
Aceldama of nations, that entombs
The nameless legions of antiquity;
Only the Gardener dare furrow thee,
Thou field as restless as a cagèd beast,
And thee He plougheth with His four great winds,
And harrows thee with whirlpool and with storm.
Evening, with silver-studded blue arras
Arching above this cloister, and the house
Of night enclose the Garden's heaving floor;
A million stars are drownèd, not too deep
To ride and flash like silver lanterns, there;
And the night breeze sweeps cool, and yet more
cool
Across the Garden and its dark, swift hills,
And lo! upon the moving waters' face,
The Gardener walking, veiled in majesty!

THE OFF-SHORE WIND

THE skies are sown with stars to-night,
The sea is sown with light,
The hollows of the heaving floor
Gleam deep with light once more,
The racing ebb-tide flashes past
And seeks the vacant vast,
A wind steals from a world asleep
And walks the restless deep.

It walks the deep in ecstasy,
It lives! and loves to free
Its spirit to the silent night,
And breathes deep in delight;
Above the sea that knows no coast,
Beneath the starry host,
The wind walks like the souls of men
Who walk with God again.

The souls of men who walk with God!
With faith's firm sandals shod,
A lambent passion, body-free,

THE OFF-SHORE WIND *(Continued)*

Fain for eternity!
O spirit born of human sighs,
Set loose 'twixt sea and skies,
Be thou an Angel of mankind,
Thou night-unfettered wind!

Bear thou the dreams of weary earth,
Bear thou To-morrow's birth;
Take all our longings up to Him
Until His stars grow dim;
A moving anchorage of prayer,
Thou cool and healing air,
Heading off-shore till shoreless dawn
Breaks fair and night is gone.

AIR CURRENTS

FAR overhead, in untried air,
A lonely eagle sails,
And, soaring effortless, like prayer—
Which only thus avails—
He is borne up, without one stroke
Of his great wings; and little folk,
Who only know earth's little things
And cannot understand what force
Lifts him unerring on his course,
Sigh for the secret of his wings.

THE HOBBY-HORSE

THIS is the Christmas toy
You gave your little boy?
A hobby horse, all bright
With harness red and white;
Already it is lame,
Worn out by many a game
Of riding up and down
The streets of Nursery Town;
The bridle reins are torn
And both its ears are shorn . . .

Fast sleeping in his bed,
His master's curly head
Dreams of to-morrow's rides:
In dreams he still bestrides
A charger black as night,
Famoused from many a fight!
He is Chief Golden Hair,
Custer the debonair;
In dreams he leads his men
Against the Sioux again;

THE HOBBY-HORSE *(Continued)*

Ringed 'round by painted braves,
His whole command he saves!

Or, smiling in his sleep,
He feels his charger leap
Against the Paynim spears,
And in his drowsy ears
He hears the battle calls
That rang at Roncesvalles . . .

With Winchester a score
Of miles away, the roar
Of cannon tells him then
He must lead on his men
And take his thund'rous track
To turn the stragglers back!

Or, mightiest of dreams,
For a world's peace he seems
To lead the meek to arms!

Thus, cradled from all harms,
A smiling Lion-Heart,
He takes a hero's part
And rides his magic horse
Through all the ages' course . . .

THE HOBBY-HORSE *(Continued)*

Ah, little curly head,
Safe in your drowsy bed,
Those battles are all done,
Yours yet to come, small son!

So we sit musing here
And strive to see made clear
What hobby you shall mount
In years you yet must count;
What hopes forlorn you'll lead;
What brave rides, on what steed!

THOMPSON STREET

QUEEN of all streets, Fifth Avenue
  Stretches her slender limbs
From the great Arch of Triumph, on,—
  On, where the distance dims

The splendours of her jewelled robes,
  Her granite draperies;
The magic, sunset-smitten walls
  That veil her marble knees;

For ninety squares she lies a queen,
  Superb, bare, unashamed,
Yielding her beauty scornfully
  To worshippers unnamed.

But at her feet her sister glows,
  A daughter of the South:
Squalid, immeasurably mean,—
  But O! her hot, sweet mouth!

My Thompson Street! A Tuscan girl,
  Hot with life's wildest blood;

THOMPSON STREET *(Continued)*

Her black shawl on her black, black hair,
Her brown feet stained with mud;

A scarlet blossom at her lips,
A new babe at her breast;
A singer at a wine-shop door,
(Her lover unconfessed).

Listen! A hurdy-gurdy plays
Now alien melodies:
She smiles; she cannot quite forget
The mother overseas!

THE MOTHER

SHE had a little baby when she first became a wife,
A tiny child she never saw on earth—
While she was still unconscious from the fever of that strife,
It died . . . it died an hour from its birth;

She never saw that daughter who was gone before she woke
(It must have seemed almost too small for Death . . .)
But often she has wakened since and thought her baby spoke,
And felt upon her cheek that tiny breath;

She sometimes cries, alone at night . . . silly enough of her,
(No one but you will ever understand!)
But oh, it was so many days she felt her baby stir,
And, in the nights . . . how many things she planned!

THE BONDWOMAN

THEN why should she complain?
She *chooses* this—the hardship and the pain,
The unrelieved, unbeautiful, dull train
Of services to others; hand and brain
Outwearied with the drudgery of earth.
Then why should she be angry at my mirth?
At me, who have been idle from my birth,
Whose unearned plenty mocks her unpaid worth?

I choose to do with nothing wearisome;
I choose to feast, to toss to her no crumb;
I choose to sing, when she, from toil, is dumb;
I spend her life for warmth, when she is numb;
I spend her toil for pleasure, choosing well
To make my life a heaven, hers a hell.

Then why should she complain?
She knows her life has in it nothing vain,
And that before the throne where Right must
reign,

THE BONDWOMAN *(Continued)*

Justice shall her great recompense constrain.
Then shall I not at last know her disdain?

Not so, this woman: in Heaven's garden-close
She'll weep, remembering the path I chose.

FLOWER-GIRL

One night, when none you knew was near you,
In a strange city built of brick and stone,
You, in your loneliness, thought none could hear you,
And wept . . . alone.

Your flowers, that seemed to you so pleading,
Faded, unsold, upon your narrow bed;
The city scorned them; and your heart was bleeding,
And hope lay dead.

But I, whose love for you had semblance
To yours for each wan flower and drooping sheaf,
Heard all your tears; and from them my remembrance
Has no relief.

FLOWER-GIRL *(Continued)*

You were so faint, and life so cruel to you!
And though your lips are smiling now in sleep,
I cannot see why any one who knew you
Should let you weep!

NURSERY JINGLE

[*A young waitress was sent to the Tombs prison for stealing three silver mesh purses and two gold tie clasps. Magistrate Blank said: "Look at the woman and look at her finery! It is quite surprising how none of these women steals anything that is a necessity of life—they always steal some personal adornment."—Daily papers.*]

I hold no brief for thug or thief
(Though they're much like me and you),
But there's no relief from the world-old grief
Of "One plus One is Two!"

Yes, One plus One is fact, not fun,
It's neither more nor less;
Who cares if it's true that the lads leave you
To follow a flaunting dress?
For Wealth is mine and Love is hers,
And neither belongs to you;
And ours is the right to keep our delight
And leave nothing for you when we're through.

Who cares if the one wild passion run
To feel the dizzying breath

NURSERY JINGLE *(Continued)*

Of the world's red lips on your finger tips?
  Can a soul be starved to death?
Ah, we *add* each Fact, but never *subtract,*
  For if once such a thing were begun,
Just think of the greed We would have to feed!
  (A soul doesn't need any sun.)

And all of this seems but the crazy dreams
  Of the girl who stood in court
And dully heard the Judge's word:
  "You are all alike, your sort!
You were clothed; you were fed, on wheaten bread,
  You'd have scorned to ask for a meal,
You had nothing to do when your day was through,
  And yet you chose—to steal!
One might forgive if you stole to live,
  For the body is worth its cost,
But *you* only stole to feed your soul,
  And who cares . . ." The ending is lost.

I hold no brief for thug or thief
  (Though they're much like me and you),
But there's no relief from the world-old grief
  Of One plus One is Two!

INDEPENDENCE HALL: 1915

THERE is an old, old city
Beside the Delaware,
Whose life flows 'round the cloister
Called Independence Square;

Beneath the cool green arches
Reared by its quiet trees,
Through all the long hot summer
There runs a little breeze:

A breath of air, that rises
And dies away again,
As fleeting as the longings
Of tired workingmen,

Who sit there on the benches,
Too tired to move or laugh,
With eyes fixed on Old Glory,
Drooping from its tall staff.

INDEPENDENCE HALL: 1915 *(Continued)*

And these men talk together
About the shady Square,
And wonder why that building
Should still be standing there.

DREAMERS

O LITTLE naked room wherein
Our work-day life is spent,
When will you cease to hem us in,
And leave the sky our tent?

THE DRUM

THIS is the heady drum
  Quenched in a long-past battle;
No more in years to come
  Will sound its thump and rattle.

But from its shattered head
  There sounds the undying story
Of those heroic dead
  Whom the drum led to glory:

"A boy—too young to bear
  A musket with the others,
Still firmly bound to share
  A service like his brother's—

Bore me, the voice of war,
  From his New England village,
And, marching on before,
  Sowed fields for war's red tillage.

THE DRUM *(Continued)*

"His very life he gave,
So dear was freedom to him;
Forget ye not the brave,
And the thrill running through him!"

Sons! look on this dead drum,
See what Peace cannot show you
In all your years to come,
Or wheresoever go you:

There see the Heart of Man—
War, only, naked shows it;
Yea, in awed silence scan
The grim war-drum that knows it!

This is the heart of fire
That burst with its hot beating,
The voice that called my sire
To war without retreating;

This is the parchment throat
Choked with its own hot clangour;
Whose last long-throbbing note
Broke in its bitter anger;

THE DRUM *(Continued)*

This is life's hottest vein,
Cooled by its own blood's bursting;
To slake those yet unslain
In Freedom's quenchless thirsting!

EASTER, 1917

On Good Friday this was done:
A nation, silent, raised the sword
And kissed its blade; while tears welled slowly.

Good Friday! Day held ever holy
Since One who had no fear of death,
No part with hate; who drew no breath
That was not drawn for others' sake,
Suffered Himself to be, by men,
Driv'n into darkness past our ken.

Good Friday! Those who seemed to see
In that day's tale a mockery
Of all we vowed in other years,
In many a church, at many an altar;
Who said greed, only, made us palter;
Who wait To-morrow with black fears
For all the hard won heights whereon
Sight may be had of nobler dawn—

To-morrow, from the sepulchre
Scented with sorrow's costly myrrh,

EASTER, 1917 *(Continued)*

A mightier force than theirs shall shake
Old wall to dust! *Right shall awake.*

For, in the souls of men shall gleam
Memories of you who kill your dream
Of selfish lives—of you, who give
Your lives for those who *fear* to *live.*

Why seek the living among dead?
Look to To-morrow, whose bright head
Is clothed in lightnings! *He* shall speak
The word for which you vainly seek:
"Only him crucified shall rise—
He clearliest sees who gladliest dies!"

Good Friday! In the sweet, clear light
Of Easter morning, see aright
The meaning of the challenging:
"A sword, not peace, to you I bring!"

These dare the tomb—
And light bursts brighter from the darkness' womb.

VICTORY?

We that are weak are lonelier to-night:
For all the learned,
The men of knowledge, those who might
Have warmed the world's worn heart, have turned
To unenduring things . . .
And those who yearned
For God's great gift of vision and the wings
Of mighty truth have each one spurned
The upward-climbing path that leads
To happy upland meads;
Their hearts—not dead nor living, that once burned
With a false fire—are cold.
Do they forget the meek?
Shall they, who might be bold
To stoop and gather all the poor and old
In an immortal happiness, be weak?
O ye who are endowed
Beyond us who are frail,
Whose hands cannot avail,
God calleth you aloud

VICTORY? *(Continued)*

Through his innumerous peoples' prayer!
Shall they that dare the skull-marked desert trail,
To reach the promised well, find no fresh water
there?

TO-MORROW'S WAR

In the cold, wet, and moaning night
I left my home, its warmth, its light,
To pace alone through many a dark and silent street:
The old, cold blood of many kings long dead,
The heavy lips of many souls long fled,
Seemed pressing down upon me like a winding-sheet.

I left my home, its warmth, its light,
Its half-read tale of ancient fight,
(The battle's blows, its shocks, its tumult in my brain
All quenched at leaving, like a wind-blown lamp),
And the night wrapped me in its mantle damp,
And mourned around me with its cold and fitful rain.
But the dawn's breath sang keener songs:
Of battle with to-morrow's wrongs,
And the wild north-wind stung my cheek until it burned,

TO-MORROW'S WAR *(Continued)*

As though to wake me to its minstrelsy
Of deeds and blood-wrought justice yet to be . . .
And fresher air with the unconquered morn returned.

THE HOLY WAR

In garments old,
By a great river,
Its dreamer trolled
(His heart a-quiver),
"In a high street
Of the great town,
The people meet,
The rich folk frown,
The rabble presses,
The children shout;
In costlier dresses
Goes the gay rout;
The wind is cold,
The poor folk shiver
In garments old,
By the great River!

"In a high street
Of the great town,
The church bell sweet
Sends rolling down
A thundering chime,
To make thrones tremble . . .
Is it not time
Ye men assemble?
O wondrous sea
Of human hearts,
Lift me on thee
Till fear departs!
Hers all the gold
I have to give her:
Your city old,
By the great River!"

How blindly have you lived, my lords,
That now you blink at flashing swords?
Why whisper to your neighbour there,
"What war is this, and why, and where?
Of wars *I* have had word of none,
Yet speaks this troop a bloody one!

THE HOLY WAR *(Continued)*

Who are these men that break our ease
With scars of fighting overseas?"

These are the men who gave up all
(And some were born to a princely hall,
And some were snug in their rags as you)
To venture their lives as nobles do,
In the utmost service of the King,
And this is their mighty marshalling!
Ah, little did *you,* blind and dull,
Think *these* would e'er be worshipful!
You curled your lip in days gone by
At the poor fools who went to die
For sorry wage and strange reward:
Warrant to serve a pauper Lord!
And stranger still their long campaign:
Theirs is no war for earthly gain,
But, facing a fearful enemy,
They die that others may be free;
By faith subduing earthly wrong;
By faith they toil and suffer long,
Enduring mockings, and the scourge,
And prison bonds; these only urge
Their spirits to more splendid deeds

THE HOLY WAR *(Continued)*

Along the way their Captain leads!
Whence came such pain-despising love?
How great of soul, how much above
Our common life, how deep our debt,
Only in vision can be set.
Yes, more than conquerors are they,
For their great King himself shall say
That neither depth, nor height, nor death,
Nor life, nor any mortal breath,
Nor present things, nor things above,
Shall separate them from His love!

What is this glorious company?
What radiant troop is this you see?

These are the men of holy wars,
Their armour dented, their many scars
Dreadful to see; their clothing worn,
Their faces haggard, their banners torn,
Their numbers few—but, oh, what fire
Burns in their eyes! How like a choir
That chanteth a glorious minster-song,
Their battle hymn as they stride along!
They *cannot* die! but, living yet,

THE HOLY WAR *(Continued)*

While tears make happy eyelids wet,
Forward they surge, a mighty band,
And, dying, live . . . and, falling, stand!

SARRÁN

SARRÁN, the music master,
  Has gone beyond the sea;
His journeyings are vaster
  Than guessed by you or me . . .
We knew his heart was broken,
  Though *why* we did not know—
Sarrán, what word was spoken,
  That made you smile and go?

Beyond the wine-dark mountains,
  Beyond the violet sea,
Beyond the silver fountains
  Of purple Castaly,
Beyond the reach of vision,
  (O matchless melody!)
He hears the harps Elysian
  Of a lost eternity!

On earth he might not listen,
  On earth he might hear not;
On earth no tears might glisten
  Within his eyelids hot;

SARRÁN *(Continued)*

On earth he knew no fountains
(Nor ever might he know),
But past the wine-dark mountains
The singing waters flow.

Redeem his ancient honor,
Redeem it with a song;
Redeem it, you who won her
And left him only wrong;
Redeem it, dole thus flinging,
(He will not thank you now),
He hears alone *her* singing . . .
(Her soul alone knows how).

Beyond the sunrise mountains,
Beyond the sun-swept sea,
Beyond the deathless fountains
Of laughing Castaly,
Beyond the reach of vision,
(O matchless melody!)
He hears the harps Elysian
Of a lost eternity.

REVEILLÉ

DREAM, dreamer, until life
Her outworn self renews,
Dream, while the silver moon
Rains down her magic dews;
Dream for the weary earth
All happy things to do—
But, when you wake this morn,
O make your dream come true!

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